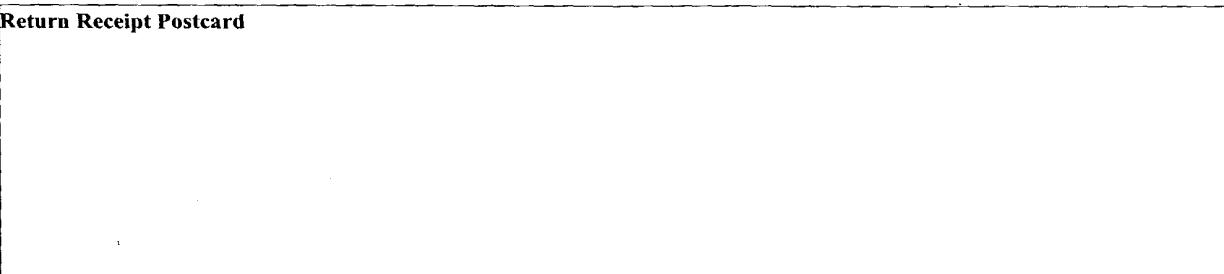
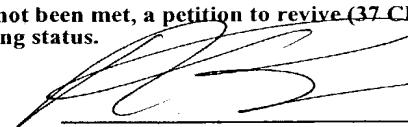


FORM PTO-1390 (Modified) (REV 11-98)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371				112843-028
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP00/01737		INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 28 February 2000		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (IF KNOWN, SEE 37 CFR Unassigned 09/914637
TITLE OF INVENTION FERRIC FORTIFICATION SYSTEM				PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 01 March 1999
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Alexander Sher, Mark Randolph Jacobson and Dharam Vir Vadehra				
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371 (c) (2)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US). <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(3)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). b. <input type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired. d. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made. <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(4)). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Preliminary Examination Report (PCT/IPEA/409). <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(5)). 				
Items 13 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. <input type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information: 				
<p>Return Receipt Postcard</p> 				

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (IF KNOWN, SEE 37 CFR On assigned 09/914637	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP00/01737	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 112843-028		
21. The following fees are submitted:		CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY		
BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)) : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO \$1,000.00 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$860.00 <input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$710.00 <input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$690.00 <input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$100.00 				
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =		\$860.00		
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492 (e)).		□ 20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 30 \$130.00		
CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	
Total claims	28 - 20 =	8	x \$18.00	\$144.00
Independent claims	10 - 3 =	7	x \$80.00	\$560.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable).		<input type="checkbox"/>		\$0.00
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS		=	\$1,694.00	
Reduction of 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity Statement must also be filed (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28) (check if applicable).		<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	
SUBTOTAL		=	\$1,694.00	
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492 (f)).		□ 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 +	\$0.00	
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE		=	\$1,694.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31) (check if applicable).		<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED		=	\$1,694.00	
		Amount to be: refunded	\$	
		charged	\$	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$1,694.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. _____ in the amount of _____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-1818 A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p>				
NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.				
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:				
Robert M. Barrett Registration No. 30,142 Bell, Boyd & Lloyd LLC P.O. Box 1135 Chicago, IL 60690-1135 312-807-4204		 SIGNATURE <hr/> Robert M. Barrett <hr/> NAME <hr/> 30,142 <hr/> REGISTRATION NUMBER <hr/> August 31, 2001 <hr/> DATE		

09/0914637

518 Rec'd PCT/PTO 31 AUG 2001

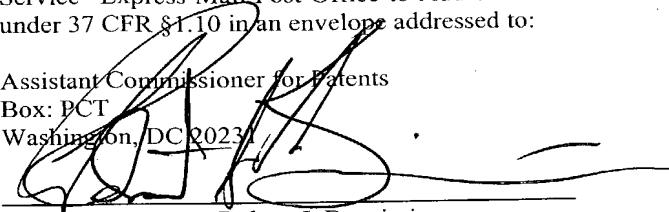
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Sher et al.
Application No. Unknown (Nationalization
of PCT/EP00/01737)
Filed: Herewith
Title: FERRIC FORTIFICATION SYSTEM
Group Art Unit: Unassigned
Examiner: Unassigned
Docket No: 112843-028

) Express Mail No. EL 647240141US

) I hereby certify that on August 31, 2001, this
correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal
Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service
under 37 CFR §1.10 in an envelope addressed to:

) Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box: PCT
Washington, DC 20231


Robert J. Buccieri

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box: PCT
Washington, DC 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Please enter the following Preliminary Amendment in the above-identified patent application.

In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 3-12 as follows:

3. (Once Amended) A [foods or] beverage which is fortified with iron, the [foodstuff or] beverage containing [an] a fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to
about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

4. (Once Amended) A [foods or] beverage according to Claim 3 which contains a fat.

5. (Once Amended) A [foods or] beverage according to Claim 3 which contains polyphenols.

6. (Once Amended) A [foods or] beverage according to Claim 5 which [is] includes a chocolate beverage base.

7. (Once Amended) A [foods or] beverage according to Claim 5 which is a liquid chocolate drink.

8. (Once Amended) A retorted liquid beverage which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system [according to claim1] comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

9. (Once Amended) A retorted liquid beverage according to Claim 8, which is a chocolate containing beverage.

10. (Once Amended) A retorted liquid beverage which contains polyphenols and a stable iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to
about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

11. (Once Amended) The retorted liquid beverage according to Claim 10 which is a tea beverage.

12. (Once Amended) A beverage powder, which contains lipid and an iron fortification system [according to claim 1] comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to
about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Please add newly submitted Claims 20-25 as follows:

20. A food containing a fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

21. A food according to Claim 20 which contains a fat.

22. A food according to Claim 20 which contain polyphenol.

23. A food according to Claim 22 which is a chocolate beverage base.

24. A food according to Claim 22 which is a liquid chocolate drink.

25. A product including a ferric-caseinate complex made of food grade ingredients obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is submitted in the above-identified patent application. Pursuant to the Preliminary Amendment Claims 3-12 have been amended and newly submitted Claims 20-25 have been added. This Preliminary Amendment does not add new matter. Further, Applicants note that the Preliminary Amendment is not being made for purposes of patentability but, merely to comport the claims to U.S. practice and/or to add

additional claims. Applicants do not intend to disclaim any subject matter in view of the amendments.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully Submitted

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD, LLC



Robert M. Barrett
Registration No. 30,142
P.O. Box 1135
Chicago, IL 60690-1135
312 807-4204

Date: August 31, 2001

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

3. (Once Amended) A beverage which is fortified with iron, the beverage containing a fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

4. (Once Amended) A beverage according to Claim 3 which contains a fat.

5. (Once Amended) A beverage according to Claim 3 which contains polyphenols.

6. (Once Amended) A beverage according to Claim 5 which includes a chocolate beverage base.

7. (Once Amended) A beverage according to Claim 5 which is a liquid chocolate drink.

8. (Once Amended) A retorted liquid beverage which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

9. (Once Amended) A retorted liquid beverage according to Claim 8, which is a chocolate containing beverage.

10. (Once Amended) A retorted liquid beverage which contains polyphenols and a stable iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

11. (Once Amended) The retorted liquid beverage according to Claim 10 which is a tea beverage.

12. (Once Amended) A beverage powder, which contains lipid and an iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

FERRIC FORTIFICATION FOR FOODS AND DRINKSField of the Invention

5 This invention relates to a fortification system which may be used to fortify foodstuffs and beverages. The invention also relates to a method of fortifying foodstuffs and beverages.

Background of the Invention

10

Iron is an essential trace element in animal and human nutrition. It is a component of heme in hemoglobin and of myoglobin, cytochromes and several enzymes. The main role of iron is its participation in the transport, storage and utilization of oxygen. Inadequate iron is a direct cause of the high incidence of 15 anemia, especially among children, adolescents and women. The need for adequate iron is one which extends for the entire life of the human being.

15

However the body does not produce iron and is totally dependent on an external supply of iron; nutritional or supplementary. The recommended daily allowance for iron intake is usually about 10 mg per day. However the amount needed is dependent on age and sex. Children, women up to the time of 20 menopause, and expectant and nursing mothers have higher requirements of iron.

20

Therefore iron deficiency is essentially a nutritional problem; a nutritional problem which is common not only in the developing countries. The problem is readily dealt with by consuming foods which naturally provide adequate iron but 25 this is not always possible in disadvantaged societies. Also, many foods normally consumed in developed countries are poor in iron.

30

To provide a source of iron, many foods and beverages are supplemented with iron. Usually the iron source used in supplementation is a soluble iron salt such as ferrous sulfate, ferrous lactate, ferrous gluconate, ferrous fumarate, ferric citrate, ferric choline citrate, and ferric ammonium citrate. Ferrous sulfate is especially common due to its good bioavailability. Unfortunately, iron supplementation and especially ferrous sulfate supplementation has deleterious effects. In particular, the iron often causes discoloration and off-flavors due to its capacity to interact with polyphenols and lipids and to promote destructive free-35 radical reactions. This is especially the case at high temperatures and in the presence of oxygen and light.

For example, the addition of a soluble iron source to chocolate milk powder causes the beverage to turn to dark gray when reconstituted with water or milk. It is believed that this is due to the interaction between the iron and iron sensitive ingredients, such as polyphenols. Further, the addition of soluble iron sources to 5 milk, cereals, other fat containing products, mostly products with high level of unsaturated fatty acids, causes flavor changes due to lipid oxidation. Lipid oxidation not only affects the organoleptic properties of foods and beverages, but also undesirably affects the nutritional quality of these products. These interactions can be also enhanced during heat treatment, such as pasteurization or 10 sterilization. In addition, the pH of some iron salts systems may not be compatible with other ingredients or may affect the flavor. Also, from a technical point of view, soluble iron salts can cause corrosion of processing equipment.

Unfortunately, non-soluble or slightly soluble iron sources such as 15 elemental iron, ferric pyrophosphate, etc., are not sufficiently bioavailable. Therefore, while they may cause little or no discoloration and off-flavor problems, they are poorly absorbed by the body.

To deal with these problems, there have been several attempts to 20 encapsulate or complex soluble iron sources in a way which reduces their reactivity but which maintains their bioavailability. However the attempts have not been entirely successful.

An example of encapsulated iron source is described in US patent 3,992,555 where iron is coated in an edible, metabolizable fat which has a melting point between about 38°C and about 121°C. Hydrogenated and refined 25 vegetable oils, and particularly distilled monoglycerides from fully hydrogenated cottonseed oil, are described to be suitable. Although this encapsulation of the iron results in about a 20% reduction in bioavailability, this is stated to be acceptable providing the iron source used has a sufficiently good bioavailability. However, the primary problem is that, if the foods must undergo any form of 30 harsh processing, the capsule is destroyed. Consequently the encapsulated iron cannot be used in products which need to be retorted or subjected to other forms of harsh treatment.

An early example of an iron complex is described in US patent No 505,986. This complex is an iron albumin preparation. The albumin is in intact but heat 35 coagulated form. The complex is recovered as a precipitate. However, when these iron albumin complexes are used in beverages, discoloration and oxidation

does occur. For example, chocolate beverages fortified with iron albumin complexes turn a gray color.

More recent examples of iron complexes are described in US patent 3,969,540 where iron in the ferric form is complexed with hydrolyzed casein or hydrolyzed liver powder. Various other hydrolyzed proteins are also mentioned as possible ligands. The complexes are collected as insoluble precipitates. Unfortunately the iron in the complexes is unlikely to have acceptable bioavailability.

Further examples iron complexes are described in US patent 4,172,072 where iron is complexed with substantially completely hydrolyzed collagen. Various other completely hydrolyzed proteins are also mentioned as possible ligands. However, the complexes are stated to be stable under acidic conditions and, since the conditions in the gut are acidic, the iron in the complexes is unlikely to have acceptable bioavailability. Also, the complexes are not sufficiently strong to prevent discoloration and lipid oxidation.

Further examples are described in US patent 4,216,144 where iron in the ferrous form is complexed with hydrolyzed protein; especially soy protein. The bioavailability of the iron in the complexes is claimed to be better than ferrous sulfate. However, when ferrous-soy hydrolysate complexes are used in beverages, discoloration and oxidation does occur. For example, chocolate beverages fortified with ferrous-soy hydrolysate complexes turn a gray color.

Other examples of iron complexes are described in Japanese patent applications 2-083333 and 2-083400. In these applications, ferrous caseinate complexes are used to treat anemia. However, these complexes are not suitable for use in fortifying foods and beverages because they are not sufficiently stable. Also, these complexes are in the form of coagulates and are difficult to disperse.

It is therefore an object of the invention to provide an iron fortification system which is relatively stable but in which the iron is relatively bioavailable.

30 Summary of the Invention

Accordingly, in one aspect, this invention provides an iron fortification system suitable for foods and beverages, the fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex.

35 It has been surprisingly found that ferric-caseinate complexes provide excellent iron fortification systems. The system is stable but the iron is

surprisingly bioavailable. Further, the system is made of food grade ingredients and is suitable for use in all foods and beverages.

In a further aspect, this invention provides a foods or beverage which is fortified with iron, the foodstuff or beverage containing an fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex.

The foodstuff or beverage may contain fat. Further, the foods or beverage may contain polyphenols.

In a yet further aspect, this invention provides a process for the preparation of a ferric-caseinate complex, the process comprising:

10 dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH
15 to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complexes which form.

Preferably, the pH of the combined ferric solution and casein solution is adjusted to about 5.8 to about 6.2.

20 Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Embodiments of the invention are now described by way of example only. This invention provides an iron fortification system suitable for foods and beverages. The fortification system is a ferric-caseinate complex which is stable 25 but in which the iron remains bioavailable. The resulting iron complexes have reduced ability to cause deleterious effects such as lipid oxidation, color degradation, and vitamin C degradation. This makes the iron complexes an ideal vehicle for fortifying foods and beverages; especially foods and beverages intended to improve nutritional status.

30 The casein used in the complex may be obtained from any suitable source of substantially intact casein. Examples include sodium caseinate, rennet casein, acid casein, non fat milk solids, and the like. Sodium caseinate obtained from MD Foods Ingredients, Inc under the name MIPRODAN are particularly suitable. The sodium caseinate may be in aqueous or dried form.

35 The ferric ion may be provided in any suitable, food grade form. Suitable examples include ferric sulfate, ferric chloride, ferric nitrate, ferric citrate, ferric

lactate, and ferric fumarate, of mixtures of these ferric salts. Ferric sulfate is particularly preferred.

The complex is produced by combining the ferric ion source and the caseinate source in solution. This must be carried out at a pH selected to avoid precipitation of the caseinate but at which free ferric ions are available. Suitably, the ferric ion source and the caseinate source are combined at a pH in the range of about 5.4 to about 7.0; for example about 5.8 to about 6.2.

The process may be carried out by dissolving the caseinate source in an aqueous liquid such as water; usually under agitation. Mixing is suitably continued until the solution is substantially homogeneous. The pH of the resulting casein solution is adjusted to an acidic pH to avoid the formation of ferric hydroxide once the ferric source is added. Preferably, the pH is adjusted to about 5.8 to about 6.0.

The ferric source is also dissolved in an aqueous liquid such as water; usually under agitation. The pH of the ferric solution is maintained at about 5.4 to about 6.2; for example about 5.4 to about 5.6. This may be done by the addition of a suitable base. Any suitable food grade base may be used. Examples of suitable bases include sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, magnesium hydroxide, sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, potassium carbonate, and potassium bicarbonate. Potassium hydroxide is preferred. The base may be at any suitable strength.

Maintaining the pH of the ferric solution above about 5.4 avoids the pH of the ferric-caseinate mixture dropping to the isoelectric point of casein. In this way, precipitation of the casein may be avoided or at least significantly reduced.

The ferric solution and the caseinate solution are then combined. This is preferably carried out under agitation with the ferric solution added to the caseinate solution; preferably slowly. The amount of the ferric solution which is added may be selected to provide the desired ferric loading. However, it is found that the optimum loading is about 1% by dried weight of iron. Of course, ferric loads of more or less than 1% may be used.

If necessary, the pH of the mixture is then adjusted to maintain it within the range of about 5.4 to about 7.0; preferably about 5.8 to about 6.2 while the ferric-caseinate complexes form. This may be done by adding a suitable food grade acid to the mixture. Examples of suitable acids include phosphoric acid, hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, lactic acid, malic acid, fumaric acid, gluconic

acid, succinic acid, ascorbic acid, or citric acid. Hydrochloric acid is preferred. The acid may be at any suitable strength.

The ferric-caseinate complexes are then permitted to form under stirring. The time necessary may be anything from about 10 minutes to about 24 hours. 5 Typically the complexes form within about 10 minutes to about 3 hours. If necessary, further acid may be added with time to maintain the pH within the range of about 5.4 to about about 7.0; preferably about 5.8 to about 6.2.

10 The complexes obtained may be used in liquid form as obtained. If desired, the pH may be adjusted to a neutral pH of about 6.0 to about 7.0 by adding a suitable base. Suitable bases are described above.

15 More preferably, the complexes are dried to powder. If desired, prior to drying the pH may be adjusted to a pH of about 6.0 to about 8.0 by adding a suitable base. Suitable bases are described above. The drying may be freeze-drying or may be spray drying. Any suitable procedure for spray- or freeze-drying the complexes to powder may be used. Suitable procedures are known in the art.

The complexes obtained are insoluble in water but are easily dispersed in water, milk and other liquids.

20 In use, the complexes are included in the ingredients making up the desired foods or beverage and the ingredients processed in the normal way. Although the bioavailability of the iron may be slightly less than that of ferrous sulfate, it is found that it is well within acceptable limits. In most cases, the statistical difference in bioavailability is not significant. Further, it is found that the 25 complexes are very stable and when used in foods and beverages, do not lead to increased discoloration or off-flavor generation. Moreover, it is found that the complexes do not increase processing problems such as fouling.

30 The complexes are particularly suitable for use in foods or beverages in liquid form; for example infant formula concentrates and ready-to-drink beverages such as chocolate and malted milk drinks. These foods or beverages usually undergo retorting or other sterilization as part of their processing and hence the ability of the complexes to withstand harsh treatment provides a great improvement. However, the complexes may be used in other types of foods or beverages such as powdered beverages, infant formulas, and infant cereals.

35 The complexes may also be included in pet foods which usually contain lipids and vitamins.

Products which contain the complexes are perceived to have similar organoleptic properties and color as compared to unfortified products. This offers the advantage that products may be fortified without causing noticeable changes which may adversely affect consumer perception. Also, it is found that 5 vitamin C is not degraded by the complexes. Hence the complexes may be used in products which are intended to be nutritionally balanced.

Specific examples of the invention are now described to further illustrate the invention.

10 Example 1

An amount of 125 g of sodium caseinate (MIPRODAN-30, MD Foods Ingredients, Inc) is dissolved in 2500 g of water under agitation. Mixing is continued until the solution is substantially homogeneous. The pH is adjusted to 15 5.8 to 6.0 using 5% and 0.1 M HCl solutions.

An amount of 5.483 g of ferric sulfate pentahydrate is dissolved in 500 ml of water at room temperature. The solution is agitated and the pH is carefully adjusted to 5.5 using a 10% NaOH solution followed by a 0.1 M NaOH solution.

The ferric solution is slowly added to the caseinate solution under 20 vigorous agitation. The suspension is stirred until it is homogeneous; about 1.0 to 1.5 hours. The pH is then adjusted to 6.0 using a 10% NaOH solution followed by a 0.1 M NaOH solution.

The suspension may be used as a liquid fortification system.

25 Example 2

The suspension of example 1 is subjected to freeze drying in a vacuum evaporator. The suspension is frozen to a temperature of -40°C.

30 The powder may be rapidly suspended in solution.

Example 3

The suspension of example 1 is subjected to spray drying in a spinning disk spray drier. The inlet temperature of the drying gas is 145°C while the outlet 35 temperature is 80°C.

The powder may be rapidly suspended in solution.

Example 4

5 A chocolate powder (QUIK, obtained from Nestlé USA, Inc) is dissolved in milk. The chocolate powder constitutes 8.5% by weight of the drink. The chocolate drink is separated into two samples a powder of example 2 or 3 is added to the drinks to provide 12.5 ppm of iron.

The milk is placed in glass jars of 125 ml and heated to 75°C for 15 seconds. The jars are closed and cooled to room temperature.

10 The jars are inspected after 1 day, 2 weeks and 4 weeks storage and the drinks evaluated for color and taste. No change in color or flavor is detected as compared to a control which does not contain iron. Also, no coagulation is detected. The results indicate that the complexes are very stable.

Example 5

15

The process of example 4 is repeated except that the milk is autoclaved at 121°C for 3 minutes.

20

The jars are inspected after 6 months storage and the drinks evaluated for color and taste. No change in color or flavor is detected. Also, no coagulation is detected. The results indicate that the complexes are very stable.

Example 6

25

The powder of example 3 is added to (i) 22.0 g of chocolate powder (QUIK) and (ii) to 22.0 g of malted beverage powder (MILO - Nestlé Australia Ltd). The powder mixtures are dissolved in 180 ml of boiling water. The beverages are stirred briefly and allowed to stand for 15 minutes. In both cases, the iron fortification is 15 ppm.

30

The beverages are then judged by a taste panel of five people for color and flavor. In each case, a control beverage produced without the powder of example 3 is used as comparison.

No change in color or flavor is detected.

Example 7

5 The powder of example 3 is added to a chocolate infant cereal to provide 7.5 mg of iron to 100 g of cereal. An amount of 55 g of the cereal is then reconstituted by adding 180 ml of boiling water. The cereal is briefly stirred and allowed to stand for 15 minutes at room temperature.

The cereal is then judged by a taste panel of five people for color and flavor. A control beverage produced without the powder of example 3 is used as comparison.

10 No change in color or flavor is detected.

Example 8

15 The powder of example 3 is added to chicken fat to provide 40 mg of iron per 1000g of fat. As a negative control, ferric sulfate is added to chicken fat to provide the same iron loading. Chicken fat without any added iron is used as a positive control.

20 The fat samples are heated to 100°C and the lipid oxidation induction time is determined using a Rancimat. No difference in induction time between the fat fortified with the powder of example 3 and the positive control is determined. The induction time of the negative control is 30 to 40% less.

The results indicate that the powder of example 3 does not induce lipid oxidation and is therefore suitable for use in products which contain fats.

25 Example 9

The procedure of example 8 is repeated except that fish oil is used in place of chicken fat. The results are similar.

30 Example 10

The bioavailability of the complexes are determined as follows:-

35 Animals:- The animals used are weanling male Sprague-Dawley rats aged 3 weeks (IFFA-CREDO, L'Arbresle, France).

Diets:- The control diet is an ICN Low-Iron diet (Soccochim SA, Lausanne, Switzerland) which has an iron content of 3 mg/kg. This diet is casein based and provides for the nutritional requirements of growing rats except for iron.

5

The experimental diets are:-

Diet A:- The control diet supplemented with FeSO₄.7H₂O to provide 10 mg/kg iron.

10 Diet B:- The control diet supplemented with FeSO₄.7H₂O to provide 20 mg/kg iron.

Diet 1:- The control diet supplemented with the complex of example 2 to provide 10 mg/kg iron.

Diet 2:- The control diet supplemented with the complex of example 2 to provide 20 mg/kg iron.

15

Analytical methods

20 1) Hemoglobin analysis is performed by anaesthetizing the rats with isoflurane and then drawing a sample of 200 µL of blood from the orbital venous plexus. Blood hemoglobin level in the sample is determined by the cyanmethemoglobin method (Hb kit MPR 3, Boehringer Mannheim GmbH, Germany), using an automated instrument (Hemocue, Baumann-Medical SA, Wetzikon, Switzerland). Commercial quality control blood samples (Dia-HT Kontrollblut, Dia MED, Cressier, Switzerland) having a range of hemoglobin levels are measured with all hemoglobin determinations.

30 2) Fe-bioavailability as compared to ferrous sulfate heptahydrate is evaluated using a slope-ratio calculation based upon hemoglobin levels. A multiple regression equation relates amounts of iron added to the hemoglobin levels. The equation provides one straight line per diet which intercepts at zero dose. The bioavailability of the iron source relative to ferrous sulfate heptahydrate is then calculated as the ratio of the two slopes. The ratio is multiplied by 100 to provide the relative bioavailability value.

35 Procedure:- Rats are housed individually in polycarbonate cages, fitted with stainless steel grids. The animals are allowed free access to distilled water.

To render the rats anemic, the rats have *ad libitum* access to the control diet for 24 days. Fresh diet is supplied daily. Spoiling of diet by rats is reduced by covering the diet with a grid.

After 24 days, hemoglobin and weight is determined. Fifty rats with 5 hemoglobin levels between 4.5 and 5.8 mg/dl are randomized into 5 groups of 10 having approximately equal mean hemoglobin and body weight. Each group of animals is fed one of the experimental diets for 14 days. The rats are fed the diets *ad libitum* beginning with 20 g/day at day 0. The rats have free access to distilled water. Individual food consumption is measured daily. After 14 days, 10 the rats are weighed and hemoglobin is determined.

Results

Mean food consumption and iron intake is not affected by the type of iron 15 source. However the rats receiving no added iron ate less than those receiving iron. The rats consuming diets with 20 mg/kg of added iron consume slightly more than those receiving diets with 10 mg/kg iron.

Weight increase of the rats is not affected by the type of iron source. 20 However, the rats receiving no added iron gained less weight than those receiving iron. The rats receiving diets with 20 mg/kg iron gain slightly more weight than those receiving the diets with 10 mg/kg iron.

The blood hemoglobin levels at the start and at the end of the period are shown in the table below.

Mean hemoglobin values; (Standard Deviation)

Diet	Added Fe (mg/kg)	Initial hemoglobin (g/dl)	Final hemoglobin (g/dl)	Difference (g/dl)
Control	0	5.12 (0.42)	4.88 (0.43)	-0.24 (0.20)
A	10	5.12 (0.41)	8.66 (0.81)	3.54 (0.65)
B	20	5.12 (0.40)	11.53 (0.86)	6.41 (0.82)
1	10	5.13 (0.39)	7.77 (0.61)	2.65 (0.35)
2	20	5.13 (0.39)	10.89 (0.79)	5.76 (0.65)

The relative bioavailabilities are as follows:-

Diet	Relative Bioavailability
1, 2	87
A, B	100

5 The bioavailabilities of the Fe-protein complex is similar to that of ferrous sulfate and, from a practical viewpoint, has a very good bioavailability.

Vonda M. Wallace
Patent Legal Specialist

Applicant: Société Des Produits Nestlé S.A.
Our file: 80299 WO (AS/SD)
PCT/EP 00/01737

Claims

1. An iron fortification system suitable for foods and beverages, the fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:
 - dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
 - adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
 - dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
 - adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
 - combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0;
 - and collecting ferric-caseinate complex.
2. The iron fortification system according to claim 1, which is in powder form.
3. A foods or beverage, containing an iron fortification system according to claim 1.
4. A foods or beverage according to claim 3 which contains a fat.
5. A foods or beverage according to claim 3 which contains polyphenols.
6. A foods or beverage according to claim 5 which is a chocolate beverage base.
7. A foods or beverage according to claim 5 which is a liquid chocolate drink.
8. A retorted liquid beverage which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system according to claim 1.
9. A beverage according to claim 8, which is a chocolate containing beverage.
10. A retorted liquid beverage which contains polyphenols and a stable iron fortification

Vonda M Wallace
Paralegal Specialist

system according to claim 1.

11. The beverage according to claim 10 which is a tea beverage.

5 12. A beverage powder, which contains lipid and an iron fortification system according to claim 1.

13. The beverage powder according to claim 12 which contains chocolate.

10 14. A process for the preparation of a ferric-caseinate complex, the process comprising:

- dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving a ferric salt in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

15 combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0;

and collecting ferric-caseinate complexes.

20 15. A process according to claim 14 in which the pH of the casein solution is adjusted to about 5.8 to about 6.0.

16. A process according to claim 14 in which the pH of the ferric solution is adjusted to about 5.4 to about 5.6.

25 17. A process according to claim 14 further comprising neutralizing the ferric-caseinate complexes to a pH in the range of about 6.0 to about 7.0.

18. A process according to claim 14 further comprising drying the ferric-caseinate complexes to powder.

30

19. A process according to claim 14 in which the pH of the combined ferric solution and casein solution is adjusted to about 5.8 to about 6.2.

PCT

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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): SOCIETE DES PRODUITS NESTLE S.A. [CH/CH]; P.O. Box 353, CH-1800 Vevey (CH). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): SHER, Alexander [RU/US]; 5005 Hancock Dr., Danbury, CT 06811 (US). JACOBSON, Mark, Randolph [US/US]; 27 Candlewood Springs, New Milford, CT 06776 (US). VADEHRA, Dharam, Vir [US/US]; 6 Hallets Road, New Milford, CT 06776 (US). (74) Agent: LOCK, Graham; 55, Avenue Nestlé, CH-1800 Vevey (CH).		Published With international search report.	
(54) Title: FERRIC FORTIFICATION FOR FOODS AND DRINKS (57) Abstract <p>An iron fortification complex which may be used to fortify foods and beverages with iron. The complex is formed of ferric ions and caseinate. The complex is sufficiently stable as to be suitable for use in retorted products. However, despite the stability, the iron in the complexes has substantially the same bioavailability as ferrous sulfate.</p>			

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

FERRIC FORTIFICATION SYSTEM

the specification of which: (check one)

is attached hereto.

was filed on February 28, 2000, as United States Application No. or PCT International Application No. PCT/EP00/01737 and was amended on August 31, 2001 (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent Office all information which is known to me to be material to the patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code Section 119 or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

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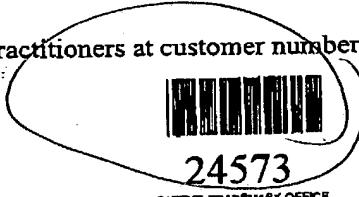
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60/122,288	March 1, 1999

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT international application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C.F.R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

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Bell, Boyd & Lloyd LLC
P.O. Box 1135
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135

And all telephone calls be directed to: (312) 807-4250.

[Signature]
Full name of sole or first inventor

Alexander Sher

Sole or first inventor's signature *AS*

Date

10/07/2002

Residence

Danbury, Connecticut

Citizenship

Russia

Post Office Address

5005 Hancock Drive

Danbury, Connecticut 06811

[Signature]
Full name of second inventor

Mark Randolph Jacobson

Second inventor's signature *M.R. Jacobson*

Date

9-26-02

Residence

New Milford, Connecticut

Citizenship

United States

Post Office Address

27, Candlewood Springs

New Milford, Connecticut 06776

[Signature]
Full name of third inventor

Dharam Vir Vadehra (deceased)

Third inventor's signature *BV*

Bina Vadehra (Bina Vadehra -- heiress of Dharam Vir Vadehra) 9/28/02

Date

Residence

New Milford, Connecticut

Citizenship

United States

Post Office Address of Dharam Vir Vadehra

6 Hallets Road

New Milford, Connecticut 06776

Post Office Address of Bina Vadehra (heiress of Dharam Vir Vadehra)

6 Hallets Road

New Milford, Connecticut 06776